



## Down on the Farm Notes: November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Hi everyone,

Hope you were able to get through everything that was in the box last week. Last Tuesday it was jam packed and this week it is sparse. Everything happened all at once last week...so to speak. Were you surprised when you pulled out a big ol' sunflower head?? I hope you enjoyed it. Roast them or let the birds eat them if you don't want to mess with it. In just one week, there wasn't anything else for the birds to eat at Rick's and they moved into the sunflower patch and totally wiped them out. Fast little eaters. Cleaned them all up!!

**This week**, you have lettuce (All from Rick, YAY!! It is growing like crazy in the hoop house!!), another sugar pie pumpkin, onions, carrots, some Thai peppers (they are hot), a surprise of blue potatoes, some cute little green things which are baby cabbages, some of you will receive oregano and some of you sage, a jar of...are you ready...zucchini relish and, for dessert, some fresh popcorn still on the cob.

I like to let my popcorn sit around for awhile as a decoration (along with that cute little pumpkin). It is so pretty. But when you get a hankering for some popcorn during

one of these long evenings, all you do is take the cob in your hand, hold on tight and twist. The kernels will come right off into a bowl. Then continue like you would any popcorn. Enjoy!! Let the Thai peppers dry and they will be good all winter. The blue potatoes are very interesting when mashed, actually rather pretty. Your kids will love them...if they are old enough that is. If they are too small, I had one customer tell me last year that the ugly blue potatoes all mashed in his plate did not appeal to him at all!!! These potatoes are also very good when roasted. Mix them with the All Reds if you have some left over and roast them together. The blues turn such a deep pretty color when roasted!! Add some of your fresh oregano or sage to your roasted potatoes. These herbs are also good in fresh pumpkin soup.

The little cabbages actually look like a Brussels sprout, but they are not. These are what grew back from the cabbages that we harvested this summer. They are so cute, we couldn't throw them away. Add them to soup or a stir fry.

Now for the relish. My family has been raised on zucchini relish. What a better

way to use some of this prolific vegetable. But we are having someone in Reno do all of the canning for us and the recipe was altered quite a bit. We are a little disappointed in it, but here it is, all made with fresh ingredients from Rick's farm. My kids love it with tuna or with roast beef sandwiches. Use it anywhere you would use sweet pickle relish. Next year, if any of you want to try canning this relish, I will share the recipe. Like I said, though, it didn't quite turn out the way we know it.

**Good news!** Tim has kiwi almost ready. After Thanksgiving you can look for kiwi, more apples (we found some Fuji) and some mandarin oranges. They are a little late in ripening this year. So it will be something to look forward to in December. Remember, only the Thanksgiving basket signups will receive a basket on the 25th. We will resume normal delivery again but for only 2 more weeks. Dec. 2nd and Dec. 9th. I can't believe the year is winding down.

**For pumpkin recipes** check out this [site](#) at Cooking .com. (mom-mom. com/ pumpkin\_soup\_recipes.htm) I was looking for a coconut pumpkin soup. I just felt like something with coconut and voila—did I find the pumpkin recipes! You have to know a little about me. I don't spend much time on the computer. I have a wealth of cookbooks sitting in shelves and all over the counter and all over the floor by my bed, and....well you get the picture. I love looking at cookbooks. (I guess this is my 2nd

addiction...1st being seeds!!!) So you have to know that I don't usually go to the computer to find a recipe. Wow!! Easy!! No excuse for not knowing how to cook something. I punched in pumpkin coconut soup and came up with all kinds of recipes that I asked for and 1,000's of others that were related!! I know some of you are laughing at me, but I still prefer sitting down with a cup of tea and a good old fashioned cookbook/magazine!!

**There seems to be quite a few of you out there who are really following this food movement** and are truly educating yourselves and becoming aware by reading and listening. By going to the following website I was able to listen to several of Michael Pollan's (author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*) interviews including an interview with NPR's Fresh Air program. It is a good interview. If you choose not to read maybe you can go to this site and listen to some of his live interviews. Go to: [michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=97](http://michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=97) click onto "Speaking" that you will find on the left side of the page. This will then give you a list of his future speaking agenda, and if you scroll down further you will find past interviews and will be able to listen to them. I highly suggest you listen to a few. He is an excellent speaker. I listened to the October Fresh Air and the May 2008 Nightline interviews. Both were excellent.

**Rick is all tucked in at the farm.** Row cover is ready to cover the crops in the hoop house when the temperatures plummet. Rick is like an old mother hen watching over his chicks right now. This will be his 3rd winter growing in a hoop house. These hoop houses are such an incredible concept. A little bit of plastic stretched over some pipe structure, closed off from the winds and easily heated by the sunshine. They create such an incredible growing environment.

But there is such a learning curve with them. We can read and learn as much as possible from other people around the world using them, but no one has the same conditions as you do so it becomes a "live and learn" situation. And the farmer blood runs deep with Rick. He checks the hoop house 3-4 times a day. It is incredibly thrilling to watch something grow at this time of the year—everything is so healthy and beautiful and green. He is one proud, happy farmer when he visits his hoop houses. Can't help it. Rick continues to love to learn. He is becoming a wealth of information for growing "on the back side of the calendar" for us Nevada folks. Thanks Rick!

Rick also has spinach growing. It is developing its third leaf right now. We are hoping it will be ready for the fall basket later on. If not, remember when the basket is finished to continue shopping at the Great Basin Food Co-Op. They carry

everything that we are currently growing or storing. They are excellent supporters of the local farms.

A meeting was held in Fallon this past week for alternative row crops that conserve water. Grapes were the biggest idea, but other ideas were thrown around. Everyone was surprised at how much interest there was right here within 100 miles of Reno and Fallon. More growers and farmers coming on board means more local product available. This is very exciting news. We all remain hopeful.

**Here are a couple more excerpts** from the cute little book I am currently reading, *The Country Kitchen*. "In the day of which I speak, an appetite was whetted by work and weather...."

A parsnip stew was best of all. Judging, however, by the earth of recipes in all the modern cookbooks that I have at my command, I must assume that parsnip stew is none too highly regarded by present-day cooks. Why, I cannot understand, unless it be that parsnip stew is an old-fashioned dish and there is hardly room for such with all the appetizers, hors d'oeuvre, canapes, and other fancy doodads that are supposed to whet a man's appetite, whether there is anything worth while to satisfy it afterward or not. In the day of which I speak, an appetite was whetted by work and weather, and all we asked was good, solid, tasty food to satisfy it."

About "diet".....

"In the days when men wrested almost an entire living from the soil, there was little talk about dieting, and little need of it. People, old and young, worked and walked and had small occasion for reducing girth or girdle. They ate strong food, and bread was believed to be the staff of life. Flour was not as yet too refined, and milk, or the water in which potatoes had been boiled, was used as liquid, lard from the crock as shortening, and the whole, when baked, provided a rich, luscious, and nutritious food from infancy to old age."

On butter...

"My father was especially fond of mashed potatoes, but there was always an argument when he came to eat them. "Pass the butter, 'Miry." "You don't need butter for your potatoes. 'Lije. There's half a cup o' butter and as much cream in 'em." "Well, what if th' is? I can't see it, can I ? I wan to see my butter." "There's butter on top, melted right into 'em. You can see that." "I can't either. Not if it's melted. Pass the butter." So no matter how much butter or cream might have gone to the foamy content of the dish, my father plastered the outside thick. My mother always threatened next time not to put any in when the potatoes were mashed. "What's the matter?" my father would want to know. " We got butter, ain't we?" So the argument came up, died down, and

appeared again rhythmically with the return of the dish. It was not the amount of butter used that my mother contended, it was the dressing of a dish already properly prepared-- an offense to her culinary art. He could sink in butter for all she cared, but enough was enough. My father's fondness for butter was something like that of the Irishman who once worked for us. He slapped a great chunk onto a piece of cheese and said, "There, domn you! Ye nivver should a been separated!"

So there you go, enjoy real butter on your mashed potatoes this week. Have a good week and stay warm! Happy cooking!!!

*Tina*

## Recipes

### Coconut/Pumpkin Bisque

2 tbl. butter  
1c. chopped onion  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
3c. pumpkin puree  
2c. chicken broth  
2 tsp. sugar  
1/2 tsp. allspice  
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper  
1 1/2c. canned coconut milk

Melt butter in a stockpot. Add onion and garlic and sauté until golden, about 8 minutes. Add pumpkin, broth, sugar, allspice (optional), and pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes.

Puree soup in batches in blender until smooth. Return to pot. Bring soup to simmer. Thin with coconut milk to desired thickness. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

### The Squash Court Soup

2 tsp. olive oil  
1c. chopped onions  
1 tsp. minced garlic  
1 tbl. grated gingerroot  
1/2 tsp. ground cumin  
6c. peeled, cubed butternut squash  
2c. chicken broth  
1 1/2c. unsweetened carrot juice  
1/4c. frozen pineapple juice concentrate  
1 tsp. grated orange zest  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. pepper

Heat olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add onions, and garlic. Cook and stir until onions begin to soften, about 3 minutes.

Stir in gingerroot and cumin, and cook for 30 more seconds. Add squash and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 12-14 minutes, or until squash is tender. Working in batches, transfer soup to a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Return pureed soup to pot. Serve hot soup with a dollop of light sour cream in the center, if desired.

## Pumpkin Scones

2 tbl. dried cranberries  
1/2c. boiling water  
1/2c. butter, softened  
3tbl. powdered sugar

Pat into an 8" circle. Cut into eight wedges; separate wedges and place on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 400 for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.

### Dough:

2 1/4c. flour  
1/4c. brown sugar  
2 tsp. baking powder  
1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 c. butter  
1 egg  
1/2 c. pumpkin  
1/3c. milk  
2 tbl. chopped pecans

Place cranberries in a small bowl; add boiling water. Let stand for 5 minutes; drain and chop. In a small mixing bowl, beat butter until light and fluffy. Add powdered sugar and cranberries, mix well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, pie spice, salt and baking soda. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk the egg, pumpkin and milk; add to crumb mixture just until moistened. Stir in pecans if desired. Turn dough onto a floured surface; knead 10 times.